10. In the Budget 2001-02, the Central Excise duty structure has been rationalised from multiple rates of single rate of 16% and single rate of Special Excise Duty (SED) @ 16%.

11. Second hand capital goods upto 10 years old have been made freely importable.

12. Information Technology Software is exempted from Customs and Excise Duty.

13. EOU/EPZ/EHTP units are exempted from payment of Income Tax on export profits, upto 2010, in terms of Section 10A and 10B of the Income Tax Act.

14. Exemption of withholding tax on interest on External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) has been extended to the IT sector.

15. Tax holiday under provisions of Section 80-1A (Infrastructure Status) has been extended to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Broadband Network providers.

16. To induce more investment for R&D activities, a weighted deduction of 125% on the sums paid to any university, college or an institution or a Scientific research association for the purposes of scientific, solar or statistical research has been provided.

17. Information Technology Act, 2000 has been enacted. This act deals with Cyber Security, Cyber Crime and other information security related legal aspects. This will encourage expansion of e-commerce through internet.

Software Technology Parks of India for Fibre Landing Facility

3431. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMCHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Standing Committee on Information Technology has asked the Planning Commission to review its decision of rejecting the proposals of Software Technology Parks of India for a fibre landing facility;

(b) if so, whether the STPI had earlier submitted a proposal for a Rs. 100 crore grant from his Ministry to set up such a facility;

(c) if so, whether the demand was rejected by the Planning Commission;

(d) whether Government accepted the recommendations of the Standing Committee; and

(e) if so, to what extent the Planning Commission has agreed to provide funds for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (e) The Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) for the fibre landing facility with funding of Rs. 100 crores. The same was taken up with the Planning Commission as part of the MIT Annual Plan for the year 2001-02. The Planning Commission did not allocate funds for the same. The Standing Committee on Information Technology in its Twenty-Fourth Report on Demand for Grants (2001-02) relating to MIT has urged MIT to take up the matter on a priority basis with the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance in this regard. The matter was discussed in the 27th meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of STPI on August 6, 2001. The GC decided to appoint a Committee to examine the necessity requirement and costing of the entire proposal.

Silicon route to Mumbai underworld

3432. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 31st May, 2001 under the caption "Silicon route to Mumbai underworld";

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what action has been taken to safeguard interests of the students in such alleged move?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As reported in the said press reprot Zap and Wintech who operate a large number of franchises nation-wide have closed down their operations in some of their centres like Delhi and Mumbai.

(c) In order to safeguard the interest of the students, DOEACC Society, an autonomous organisation under Ministry of Information Technology has a voluntary scheme by the name of DOEACC scheme, under which IT institutions in the private sector are given accreditation for conduct of DOEACC courses subject to their meeting well defined criteria in terms of faculty, infrastructure etc.